



INFORMANT SPOTLIGHT

By *James Hofmann*

The Readers Speak

1996 *Delphi Informant* Reader's Choice Awards

Since its premiere in April of 1995, *Delphi Informant* has endeavored to bring you current information about the products and services available to the Delphi developer community. Each month's issue features Delphi-centric product announcements and industry news in our "Delphi Tools" and "Newline" columns. *DI* also regularly features book reviews and product reviews in our respective "TextFile" and "New & Used" columns.

This month, however, we turn the tables. It's time to voice your opinion and this is the result: The First Annual *Delphi Informant* Reader's Choice awards.

We asked you to pick your favorites from nearly 100 products in 12 categories. And you responded, sending ballots by fax, e-mail, the World Wide Web, and even snail mail. As expected, some categories were highly competitive, with winners determined by few votes. In others, precedents have been set by establishing clear leaders in the Delphi add-on market.

But enough preamble; let's cut to the chase.

Product of the Year

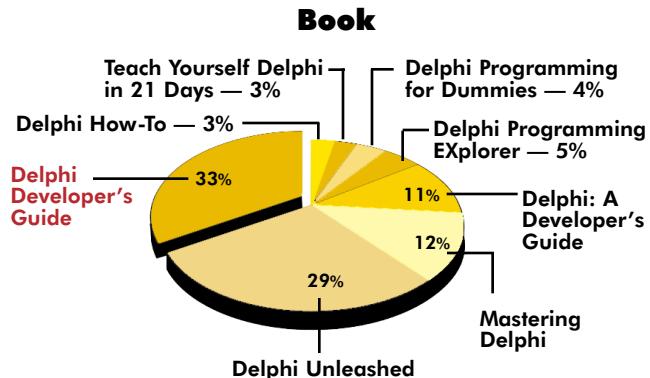
With the most votes overall, this year's Product of the Year is Woll2Woll Software's InfoPower. Woll2Woll Software began by producing Paradox-specific tools, and leapt into the Delphi tools market early, releasing InfoPower just months after Delphi 1.0 shipped. For more information about InfoPower, see "Best VCL" below, and the sidebar "InfoPower Selected as Product of the Year" on page 29.

The Reader's Choice Awards proved to be highly competitive. In fact, the vote was so close for Product of the Year that we decided to give the second place finisher — Borland's InterBase server — an Honorable Mention award.

Best Delphi Book

Two books clearly dominated the Best Book category. Both from SAMS Publishing, *Delphi Developers Guide*, by Xavier Pacheco and Steve Teixeira, took first, narrowly beating Charles Calvert's *Delphi Unleashed*.

"If you're serious about Delphi, you need this

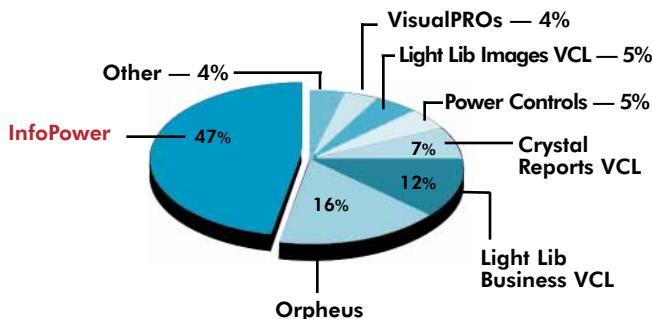


book," said Tim Feldman in his review of *Delphi Developers Guide*, in the November 1995 *DI*. "In 22 chapters, it covers every major area of Windows ... programming using Delphi."

And while perhaps not on the top shelf, two other Delphi books made a very good showing. From Sybex, Marco Cantu's *Mastering Delphi*, and from M&T Books, *Delphi: A Developer's Guide* by Bill Todd and Vince Kellen, finished third and fourth respectively.

Best VCL

Besides being Product of the Year, Woll2Woll Software's InfoPower got the nod as Best VCL. A collection of data-aware components that enhance Delphi's existing VCL components, InfoPower includes an enhanced data grid, database filtering, lookup combo boxes, expanding memo dialog boxes, incremental search components, and more.

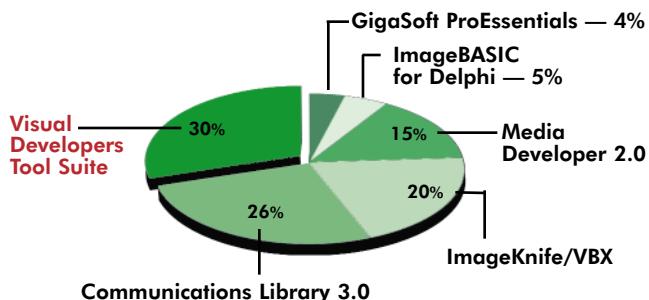
VCL

Blow the dust off your August 1995 *DI* for a detailed look at InfoPower's unique features. In his review, Joseph Fung called InfoPower's components "complete and well thought out, significantly enhancing the development process." It appears you agree. In one of the more populated categories, Woll2Woll carried a whopping 47 percent of the votes.

In the second tier of popularity, TurboPower's Orpheus and DFL Software's Light Lib Business VCL, took second and third places respectively.

Best VBX

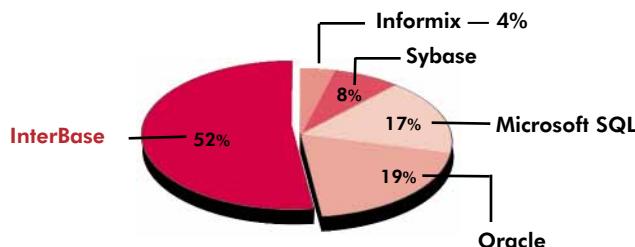
Given the variety of VBXes, it's no surprise the competition was stiff in this category. Yet when all was said and done, Visual Components' Visual Developers Tool Suite edged out its opponents with 30 percent of the total votes.

VBX

A close second, MicroHelp's Communications Library 3.0 acquired 26 percent of the vote, while Media Architects' ImageKnife/VBX took third with 20 percent.

Best Database Server

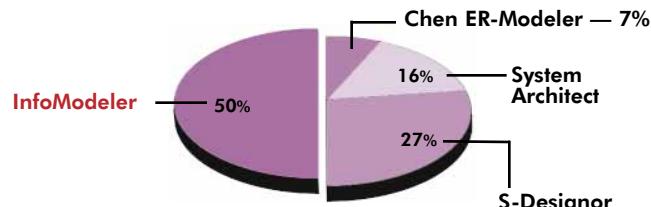
In addition to receiving Honorable Mention for its close second-place finish as Product of the Year, Borland International's InterBase secured 52 percent of the vote in the Best Database Server category.

Database Server

Borland's InterBase 4.0 Workgroup Server has had a great year. In its biggest sale ever, Borland closed a deal with the US Army to use InterBase in its Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System (AFATDS). The Army selected InterBase because of its platform-independence, robustness, and other unique features. For more information about InterBase, see the sidebar "InterBase Emerges from the Shadows" on page 30.

Best Database CASE Tool

There's no doubt about your choice as Best Database CASE Tool. Half of you agreed that Asymetrix Corporation's InfoModeler is the best way to automate database creation and maintenance. Asymetrix shipped InfoModeler 1.5 in October of 1994, adding connectivity to several databases including Informix, Ingres, Sybase, and Visual dBASE. Version 1.5 also incorporates model import/export, and two new tools: Fact Assistant and Verbalizer.

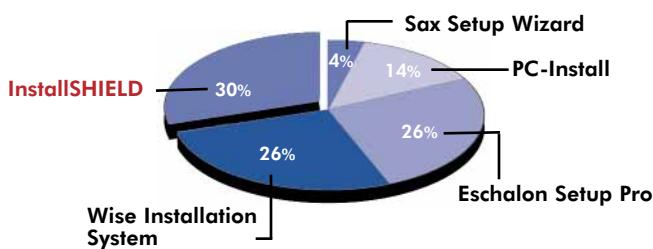
Database CASE Tool

S-Designer from SDP Technologies came in second place, followed by Popkin Software's System Architect, and Chen & Associates' Chen ER-Modeler.

Best Installation Software

To the finish, the Best Installation Software category was one of the tightest races. Three products dominated the category: InstallSHIELD from InstallShield Corporation finished first,

Installation Software



narrowly besting Great Lakes Business Solutions' The Wise Installation System, and Eschalon Development's Eschalon Setup Pro.

Recently, InstallShield Corporation and Borland International, have collaborated to create a software deployment toolkit, InstallShield Express, for Borland's C++ Development Suite. Borland is also working exclusively with InstallShield Corporation to provide software deployment solutions for all other Borland products, including Delphi 2.0, Visual dBASE, and Paradox 7.

Reviewed by Micah Bleecher in the February 1996 *DI*, The Wise Installation System features full system access, a custom

InfoPower Selected as Product of the Year

Delphi Informant readers selected Woll2Woll Software's InfoPower as their favorite Delphi add-in product by casting more votes for it than any other product in any category.

Woll2Woll reviewed a beta version of Delphi in late 1994 with hopes of creating a Delphi tool. They wanted to help database developers familiar with products like Paradox for Windows feel more productive with Delphi. In their market research, Woll2Woll found database developers didn't want to compromise the quickness or functionality of their applications, but wanted the speed of true .EXE files.

The InfoPower suite includes 15 visual and non-visual data-aware Delphi components, designed for 16- and 32-bit Windows database applications. The suite features an enhanced data-aware grid that supports fixed columns, checkboxes, embedded multi-field lookup combo boxes, dynamic cell coloring, multi-line titles, memo display, and editing. It also includes customizable dialog boxes for locating field values in a table, query, or query-by-example (QBE), where searches can be case-sensitive, pattern based, or incremental.

InfoPower also provides database lookup facilities and customizable dialog boxes that can be attached to any event. Additionally, InfoPower includes a QBE component that operates just as its Paradox counterpart, as well as a Table component that provides data filtering capabilities.

Woll2Woll is currently working on InfoPower 2.0 which they expect to ship in May, 1996. New functionality will include field validation, visual filtering and querying, and the ability to print the contents of a grid. The new version will also feature enhancements to existing InfoPower components, such as multi-record selection and bitmap support in the grid component, and other developer-requested features and functions.

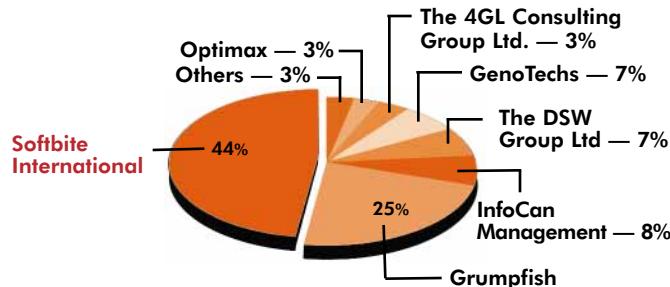
dialog box editor, multimedia support, Windows 95 support, and notably, specific Borland Database Engine (BDE) support, among others.

You obviously consider Eschalon Setup Pro a worthy installation tool. So do AT&T, DOW, Kodak, Electronic Arts, Macromedia, Polaris, Sprint, Xerox, and the Army Corps of Engineers, all of whom have made it their standard installation tool.

Best Training

Established in 1988, Softbite International has become known not only as a leader in software training, but in consulting as well. You chose Softbite as Best Training organization, giving it 44 percent of your votes. Oregon-based Grumpfish Incorporated made a strong second place showing with 25 percent of the votes.

Training

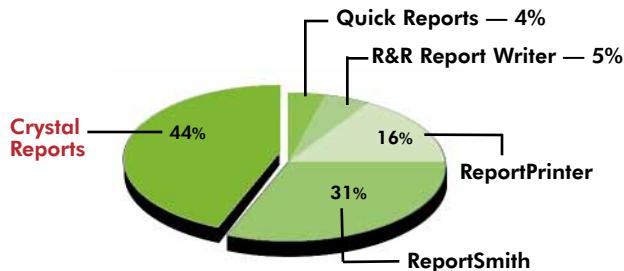


Still expanding, Softbite recently added accounting services. Regarding their 1996 agenda, Softbite founder Kevin Smith said, "We'll increase support for Delphi and stay on the developer side of Paradox 7."

Best Reporting Tool

All questions have been answered about the Best Reporting Tool — Crystal Reports from Crystal Services/Seagate Software is the clear winner. The recently released version, Crystal Reports 4.5, includes a Delphi VCL, a full-featured OLE (OCX) control, a 32-bit Report Engine DLL, the ability to drill down on graphs, new Lotus Notes and Excel 5.0 export formats, and the ability to save report options with the report.

Reporting Tools

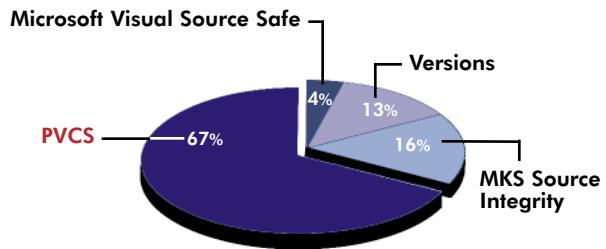


These are some of the features that keep Crystal Reports a leader in the reporting tool market, and the winner of the Best Reporting Tool with 44 percent of the votes. Borland International's ReportSmith finished a healthy second, and Nevrona Designs' ReportPrinter took third place.

Best Version Control

An established software configuration management tool, INTERSOLV's PVCS Version Manager commands the Best Version Control category with 67 percent of the ballots. PVCS Version Manager enables a team of programmers to track file changes during application development. Developers can check out and modify source code, executables, utilities, and documentation files.

Version Control

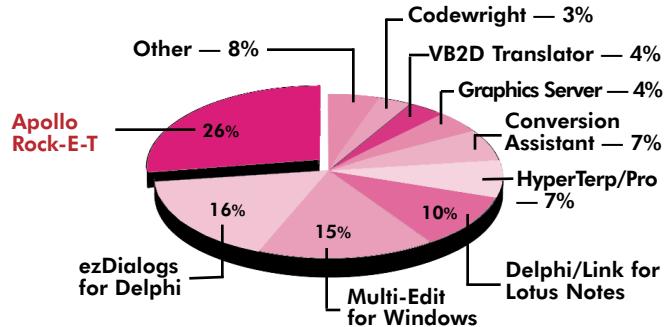


INTERSOLV has recently announced that Borland will incorporate PVCS Version Manager into the Borland C++ 5.0 Development Suite.

Best Delphi Add-In

In another hotly-contested category, SuccessWare International and Woll2Woll Software battled to the end for Best Delphi Add-In. With an onslaught of last minute votes, SuccessWare International's Apollo Rock-E-T emerged as your favorite with 26 percent of the votes.

Delphi Add-In



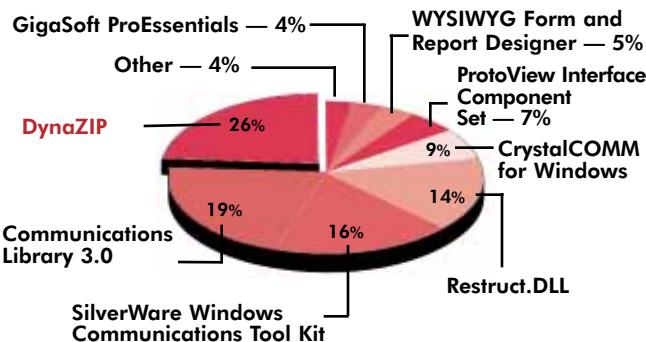
Woll2Woll Software's ezDialogs for Delphi received 16 percent of the votes. And in a near-tie for second place, American Cybernetics' Multi-Edit for Windows took third with 15 percent of the votes.

Of the 12 categories, the race for Best Delphi Add-In was the most crowded with over 13 products receiving votes. Other notables included: Borland/Brainstorm Technologies' Delphi/Link for Lotus Notes, HyperAct's HyperTerp/Pro, and EarthTrek's Conversion Assistant.

Best DLL

Giving it 22 percent of the votes, you named Inner Media's DynaZIP as Best DLL. Balloting was tight however, and MicroHelp's Communications Library 3.0 came in a close second with 19 percent of the votes.

Windows DLL



Released during the last quarter of 1995, DynaZIP features 16- and 32-bit versions for Windows, Windows 95, and Windows NT, plus a new DZ_EASY interface. DynaZIP also offers OCX and VBX support.

The third and fourth place finishers — SilverWare's Windows Communications Tool Kit, and TrayMar Software's Restruct.DLL — made strong showings as well.

Best Windows Help Authoring Tool

The Best Help Authoring Tool category had two clear front-runners, but Blue Sky Software's RoboHELP came in first with 46 percent of the votes. For more information about RoboHELP, pull out the January 1996 issue of *DI* and help yourself to Gary Entsminger's review.

InterBase Emerges from the Shadows

InterBase's strong showing in the *Delphi Informant* Reader's Choice Awards is just another example of its recent, rapid rise into prominence. Considered the "Crown Jewel" of the Ashton-Tate acquisition, InterBase nevertheless remained obscure and isolated from the rest of the Borland product line. Its bundling with the phenomenally successful Delphi changed all that.

Borland has finally begun a tighter integration of InterBase with the rest of their products, propelling InterBase forward in sales and market penetration. Delphi 2.0 Client/Server Suite is the latest effort in Borland's "Trojan horse" strategy to entice Delphi developers to embrace InterBase. The new Suite includes not only the new Windows 95/NT Local InterBase server, but also the multi-user InterBase NT Server for prototyping and developing multi-user applications. In addition, a new Event Alerter component has been added to the VCL, allowing developers much tighter integration to the InterBase engine.

Borland isn't content with Delphi/InterBase synergies, however, and has rumored that future versions of their Java tools, code named "Latte," may include InterBase or InterBase connectivity as well. The endorsement by Borland's InterBase of the new JDBC standard by Sun Microsystems, Inc. is further evidence that something formidable is brewing.

With growth of InterBase sales close to 40% in 1996, and new versions available almost every month, it looks like Borland's evolution from desktop tools provider to client/server provider is succeeding.

Contacting the Winners

Best Book

Delphi Developer's Guide
Xavier Pacheco & Steve Teixeira
SAMS Publishing
ISBN: 0-672-30704-9
Phone: (800) 428-5331
Web Site: <http://www.mcp.com>

Best VCL

InfoPower
Woll2Woll Software
2217 Rhone Drive
Livermore, CA 94550
Phone: (800) 965-2965 or (510) 371-1663
Fax: (510) 371-1664
CompuServe: GO WOLL2WOLL
Web Site: <http://woll2woll.com>

Best VBX

Visual Developers Tool Suite
Visual Components, Inc.
15721 College Boulevard
Lenexa, KS 66219
Phone: (913) 599-6500
Fax: (913) 599-6597
Web Site: <http://visualcomp.com>

Best Database Server

InterBase
Borland International Inc.
100 Borland Way
Scotts Valley, CA 95066-3249
Phone: (408) 431-1000
Web Site: <http://www.borland.com>

Best Database CASE Tool

InfoModeler
Asymetrix Corporation
110 110th Ave. NE, Suite 700
Bellevue, WA 98004-5840
Phone: (800) 448-6543 or (206) 462-0501
Fax: (206) 454-7696
Web Site: <http://www.-asymetrix.com>

Best Installation Software

InstallSHIELD
InstallShield Corporation
1100 Woodfield Road
Suite 108
Shaumburg, IL 60173
Phone: (800) 374-4353 or (847) 240-9111
Fax: (847) 240-9120
E-Mail: Internet: info@-installshield.com
Web Site: <http://www.-installshield.com>

Best Training

Softbrite International
33 N Addison Road, #206
Addison, IL 60101-8401
Phone: (708) 833-0006
Fax: (708) 833-0584
Web Site: <http://www.softbrite.com>

Best Reporting Tool

Crystal Reports
Crystal Services/Seagate Software
1095 West Pender St., 4th Floor
Vancouver, BC Canada V6E 2M6
Phone: (800) 663-1244 or (604) 681-3435
Fax: (604) 681-2934
CompuServe: GO REPORTS
Web Site: <http://www.seagate.com/software/crystal>

Best Version Control

PVCS
INTERSOLV
1700 NW 167th Place
Beaverton, OR 97006
Phone: (800) 547-7827 or (503) 645-1150
Fax: (503) 645-4576
E-mail: Internet: pvcinfo@-intersolv.com
Web Site: <http://www.intersolv.com>

Best Delphi Add-In

Apollo Rock-E-T
SuccessWare
27349 Jefferson Avenue, Suite 111
Temecula, CA 92590
Phone: (800) 683-1657 or (909) 699-9657
Fax: (909) 695-5679
CompuServe: GO SWARE

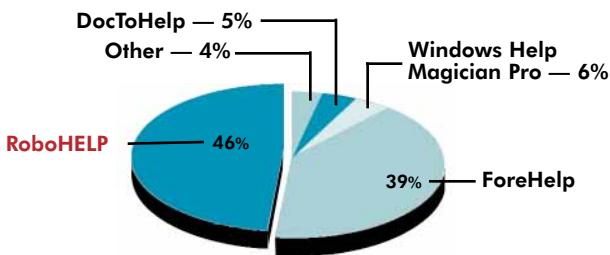
Best DLL

DynaZIP
InnerMedia, Inc.
60 Plain Road
Hollis, NH 03049
Phone: (800) 962-2949 or (603) 465-3216
Fax: (603) 465-7195
E-Mail: CIS: 70444,31

Best Help Authoring Tool

RoboHelp
Blue Sky Software Corp.
7777 Fay Ave., Suite 201
La Jolla, CA 92037
Phone: (800) 677-4946 or (619) 551-2485
Fax: (619) 551-2486
Web Site: <http://www.bluesky.com>

Help Authoring Tool



ForeFront's ForeHelp dominated the other contenders, placing second with 39 percent.

Thank You

In the final analysis, third-party Delphi products are only productive when they enable developers to "get the job done." This makes you — the greater Delphi community — the only true arbiter. Thanks to you, the Delphi community now has a good idea of the products available — and which are most popular.

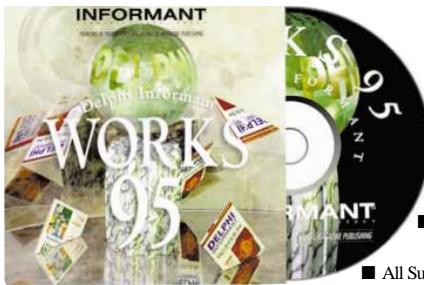
We would also like to thank the vendors for spending the time and money to develop such excellent Delphi products. The Delphi third-party marketplace is buzzing, and the excitement will only increase when Delphi 2.0 hits the shelves. We're looking for many new Delphi products in the coming year, including OCXes, Web-enabling components, and many more we cannot even envision. △

James Hofmann is Assistant Editor for *Delphi Informant*.



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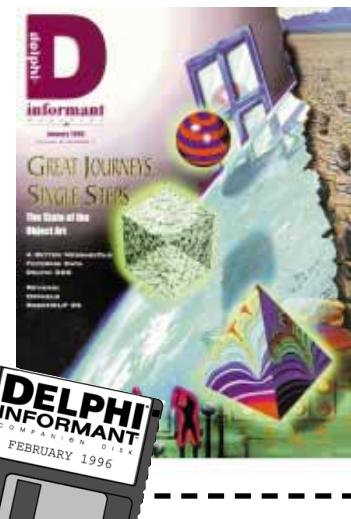
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